

## Report shows new energy customer protections starting to bite

Increased consumer protections continue to take hold in the Victorian energy market according to a new report from the state's energy regulator.

The Essential Services Commission's 2017–18 snapshot of the Victorian energy market highlights improvements to the state's customer protection framework, action taken against retailers for breaching energy rules, and the continuing evolution of the energy generation sector.

The commission's energy director Sarah McDowell says the report catalogues the introduction of a raft of new protections for energy customers.

"We started the year by finalising a new framework to protect vulnerable customers including requirements for retailers to provide more help to people who are having difficulty paying their bills.

"We also extended consumer protections for over 200,000 customers living in apartments and caravan parks," she said.

The report covers the commission's action against Alinta Energy which paid penalties totalling \$300,000 for allegedly signing up 15 customers without their consent.

The commission also resolved eight wrongful disconnection cases leading to customer payments totalling \$3,639\*.

Ms McDowell says the report shows how the energy landscape continues to evolve with new forms of energy generation coming online.

"During 2017–18, we approved nine new licences including six generation licences, two retail licences and one wholesale licence.

"This included two solar farms and four wind farms," she said.

Today's report does not include annual performance data across retailers, after AGL failed to meet the reporting deadline. Although AGL subsequently provided data on 31 October 2018, it was not provided with reasonable levels of assurance in time.

The complete 2017–18 Victorian Energy Market annual report will now be released in early 2019.

The snapshot report is now available on our [energy market reports](#) on our website.

\*Wrongful disconnection cases resolved in 2017–18.

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